Strange Music

Moving Settlement

IN THE WAKE OF WIND

(a legend of the strange music, said to be heard at times in a section of the prairie of Southeastern Alberta which has been deserted because of soil-drifting)

Three days ago their child had died. They buried it in the dry earth bed of the wind-twisted morning glory vine. Since then the wind had blown without stop, mounting the madness in the brain of Mary Howes. There had always been that sound of wind. Wind that broke and spoiled the efforts of his years and took all John Howes had ever owned or hoped to own.

He looked now, to the rifle above the door and then to Mary by the cradle. The hot, dry wind, blasting through the broken window, streamed her hair and clothes and wrapped her in its sound. His last possession had been claimed.

For Mary never had submitted to the wind. Each year she planted morning glories in the dry earth bed and hope in the heart of John. When both the morning glories and the hope had wilted in the wind she squared his shoulders with her faith in the harvest that would come. She (always) said the harvest was a sure promise of God.

John always knew the wind was stronger than himself. Now it seemed to be stronger than the promise of God and stronger than the faith of Mary. All that had been his strength was gone. A wind blast shook the house and crashed the rifle to the floor.

All the light of sanity was gone from ~~the face of Mary~~ Mary's face. Leaning to the cradle she commenced the wild lullaby against the wind's sound. Soon she would find the child was gone. The frantic search would come again. Her fists would beat upon him and her wild accusations join with the wind sounds in his ear.

Over, and over, in the last three days she had done these things.He could not bear it once again.He must end her madness. From his ears he must shut out forever that which was the sound of wind.

Her lullaby was closing now.In her mad hope and joy she bent above the cradle, searching for the child.It must be now, before she knew despair again.It must be now.

He took the rifle in his hands.How hard it was to hold it steady.There was just the short, sharp sound, and Mary lay beside the cradle.The one bloom of the wind-twisted morning glory blo vine was in her hands.He took the rifle up again---

They found them both,beyond the madness and the wind.

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In the year which followed the promise of a harvest was fulfilled.The rain came, and dormant seeds in John's field grew up among the weeds, while in the dry-earth bed, the morning glory vine arose and filled the dark window-gap with bloom.

Some say, that in the summer dawn a music floats across the prairie;the figure of a man walks from the wheat field to the window where the morning glories bloom;a woman with a child in arms goes out to meet him,singing.And as the music rolls and fills the plains the figures walktogether to the sun.